

## GEORGE BELLOWS in London

The National Gallery, London has just announced its landmark acquisition of the famous George Bellows painting *Men of the Docks* of 1912, a much admired treasure that for many years was a proud feature of the Maier Museum of Randolph College in Virginia, for a published price of \$25,500,000. This is notable as the first purchase of an important American painting by the National Gallery (they already have a minor work by George Inness) and the first such acquisition by any museum outside the United States in many years. George Bellows (1882-1925) is, of course, a leading figure in the history of American art, the primary link between Winslow Homer and Edward Hopper, each of whom has been the subject of museum exhibitions in London in recent times. Bellows is one of the most admired and eagerly collected American artists and best known for his figure paintings (including the “fight” scenes) and urban subjects dating from the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. He was the major painter of the so-called “Ashcan” School, which flourished in those critical years and focused on scenes of urban squalor rather than countryside elegance, bare, unadorned people of the streets rather than coutured ladies in summer sunshine, as epitomized by the Impressionists of America as well as Europe. Relevant to and preceding the Bellows acquisition, which is now on view at the National Gallery, alongside Manet, was their exhibition *An American Experiment: George Bellows and the Ashcan Painters* of 2011 (sponsored by the Terra Foundation of American Art), which was followed in 2013 by the Bellows retrospective that came to the Royal Academy of Art from the National Gallery in Washington and the Metropolitan in New York – the two presentations underlying and supporting interest in Bellows in the UK.

In connection with this ground-breaking institutional commitment to Bellows, Collisart is pleased to be featuring, at the forthcoming Masterpiece Fair in London (June 26 – July 2), a highly important early Bellows painting, *Miss Bentham (Early Standing Nude)* of 1906. At 6 by 3 feet, this imposing figure, from Bellows’s most significant period, is at once a reflection of such Old Masters as Velazquez and Goya and such 19<sup>th</sup> Century masters as Courbet and Manet, and a forerunner of such key moderns as Francis Bacon and Lucien Freud. This painting has the distinction of once belonging to Andy Warhol.